

I oppose loosening the rules designed to promote and protect diversity of media ownership. These rules were adopted to ensure that the public would receive a diverse range of viewpoints from the media, and not simply the opinions of a handful of media conglomerates.

I realize that there are a much larger number of media outlets than there were in years past. I do not believe, however, that this leads to access to a more diverse range of viewpoints for most people than a few years ago. For example, the Internet provides access to a huge variety of sources but most users have difficulty coping with the huge range of options and tend to use a few familiar (and very heavily promoted) choices. Most of them are from the same sources you see in other media - CNN, major newspapers, etc. Local content on the Web can be difficult to find (or for many areas may not very limited). People who have access to many television channels by cable or satellite often still have difficulty in finding local programming. The commercial channels that predominate are becoming more homogenous and less informative. The recent cancellation of two major news programs on BET to provide more time for entertainment programs from the new owners other outlets is a good example.

Easy access to programming that brings a wide diversity of viewpoints including minority and noncommercial views is essential for a modern democracy. The proposed rule change threatens that and puts narrow commercial interests ahead of the needs and values of the American people.